

NSC BRIEFING

1 August 1957

GUATEMALA

- I. Defense Minister Col. Juan Francisco Oliva is in virtual control of Guatemala following President Castillo's death on 26 July.
- A. He controls army and has declared 30-day "state of siege."
 - B. Army and government machine have chosen him as next president.
 - 1. He reportedly plans to extend state of siege long enough to become constitutionally eligible for presidency. (He must resign from cabinet six months before election.)
 - C. Until elections are over, however, political instability can be expected. Army officers may attempt coup in next few days.

25X1C
II.

- Castillo aware of assassination plots against him. Informed speculation tends to doubt official story of Communist inspiration.
- A. The underground Communist Party has opposed assassination or revolution until after it has built up mass support.
 - 1. Pro-Communist ex-presidents Arbenz and Arevalo publicly rejoiced, however.
 - 2. The army claims to have documentation proving Vasquez was a Communist. This overplaying of the Communist angle suggests the army is covering another motivation or at least establishing a scapegoat to cover for letting assassin become member of presidential bodyguard.
 - B. Vasquez may have been fanatic operating independently.
 - C. Also possible that ultra-rightist opponents of Castillo's middle-of-road policies may have used Vasquez.